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American Institute of Sacred Literature.

TRAINING COURSES FOR SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHERS UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE INSTITUTE.

TO MANY who are interested in Sunday-school work the question of the introduction of better lesson material seems less pressing and less perplexing than that of securing a better quality of teaching. The close observer, familiar with the facts, cannot fail to appreciate the large aggregate amount of good Sunday-school teaching which is in process in England and America; but, on the other hand, no thoughtful person can fail to see how few, in proportion to the vast number of persons engaged in Sunday-school teaching, is the number of well-equipped workers. The question of teacher-training therefore goes hand in hand with that of better material for study, and indeed may frequently precede it.

It is clear that here is a field in which teaching by correspondence has peculiar advantages. It deals personally and exclusively with the individual student. It makes demands upon him which cannot be made in a large training class. It gives an opportunity to ask questions which cannot be given proper attention in a class. It brings the student into close contact with a specialist whose experience and scholarship must be of the greatest service. Recognizing the peculiar appropriateness of the correspondence method for this particular purpose, the AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF SACRED LITERATURE takes great pleasure in announcing herewith a full series of *Teacher-Training Courses*.

These courses will not be too technical for the average inexperienced Sunday-school teacher. The instruction will be given by specialists who are at the same time practical Sunday-school workers. It is believed that by emphasizing this feature of the instruction the courses may happily unite sound theory and practical adaptation to existing conditions in the Sunday school. The instructor will in each case make special effort to become acquainted with the practical local difficulties hampering the student, and to make suggestions which will tend to obviate them.

Courses upon the following subjects are practically arranged for

The first two and the eighth are ready for students, and, unless unforeseen difficulties arise, the remainder will all be ready by September 1. The text-books upon which the courses are based are of the highest type, and widely representative so far as their publishers and authors are concerned.

1. *An Introduction to the Bible* intended for all teachers of children under the age of twelve years or thereabouts.

2. *An Introduction to the Bible* for teachers of children above the age of twelve years or of adults. This course covers the same ground as Course 1, but from an entirely different point of view. In both courses the books of the Bible are studied in relation to their place in the history in connection with which they were produced. A choice between these two courses will be made on the basis of the age of the pupils whom the student desires to teach.

3. *The Adaptation of Fundamental Principles of Psychology and Pedagogy to Sunday-School Teaching*—a course based upon a most interesting study of the subject presented in a book by a well-known author which is not yet off the press.

4. *A Rapid Survey of the Life of Christ*—a fundamental course for all those who wish to teach that subject; a course which will also put them into possession of a valuable text-book for advanced work with a class.

5. *A Rapid Survey of the Life of Paul*—similar to the fourth course.

6. *A Rapid Survey of Old Testament History*.

7. *A Preview of the International Lessons for 1904-5*—a course intended to give the best help possible to teachers who are willing to take up the lessons six months in advance of teaching them, gaining thereby a general view of all before teaching any of them.

8. *Kindergarten Principles and Their Adaptation to Primary Work*—a course under a trained kindergartner who has for a number of years been developing a series of lessons for this grade of the Sunday school. The pupils in this course will receive the material of a book in advance of its publication.

9. *The Organization and Administration of the Sunday School*—a course intended especially for superintendents and those directly interested in this phase of the Sunday school, based upon the reading of several books and the discussion of practical problems.

New courses will be added as needed. A diploma will be conferred on the basis of three courses, as follows; Course 1, or 2 (optional); Course 3, and a selection of any one course, from Courses 4-9, appro-

priate to the local conditions of the student. Thus every teacher who desires a diploma will have a course in Biblical Introduction, and one in Pedagogy, an acquaintance with these two subjects being considered fundamental to all good teaching in the Sunday school.

An effort has been made to keep the expense at the lowest possible figure, in order that the work may be accessible to the largest number of teachers. For the first year the fee for any course except the kindergarten will be five dollars, with an additional one dollar for postage. A fee of ten dollars will be charged for the kindergarten course, it being necessary for the instructor in this department to furnish text-book material. It is suggested that the Sunday schools take up officially the matter of training teachers through these correspondence courses, that the superintendent or the pastor select the teacher or teachers to be trained, and that the school pay the expense of the training. The publishers of the books upon which the courses are based are arranging to supply schools with books of reference by a loan system, the books to be bought or returned after a reasonable use, according to the choice of the school.

It would seem by the foregoing that the last obstacle to teacher-training had been removed; but those who have been long in the work know that there is an indifference among Sunday-school teachers and an ignorance of the critical nature of their work and its paramount importance which is by far the greatest obstacle to progress. This cannot long be the case, for on every hand the leaders in Sunday-school work are advocating the special training of teachers and seeking to magnify the importance of a better quality of teaching. Such widespread efforts must soon result in weeding out the lazy and indifferent, and giving fresh inspiration to the earnest and ambitious teacher.

We rely upon our friends to extend the announcement of these courses as widely as possible. Circulars for distribution will be freely forwarded, and will be addressed to all names of superintendents and teachers which may be sent in.¹ Will not every reader of this announcement see that such circulars reach all the teachers and the superintendent in at least his own Sunday school? Courses 1, 2 and 3 will be carried on during the summer, so that teachers enrolling at once will be well advanced in their work by the autumn.

¹ Address THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF SACRED LITERATURE, Hyde Park, Chicago, Ill.